



# Department of Justice

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## **“OPERATION BITE BACK” DOG FIGHTING BUST NETS JAIL TIME FOR SEVERAL**

[DAYTON, OHIO]— In March of this year, local, state and federal law enforcement agencies shut down a massive dog fighting operation based out of Southwest Ohio. This coordinated effort, referred to as “Operation Bite Back,” resulted in the arrest of 54 individuals on state and federal charges. To date, 34 defendants have been convicted.

All of the ten defendants facing federal charges in “Operation Bite Back” related crimes have been convicted. Nine pled guilty and the tenth, William Pike, was convicted at trial in U.S. District Court in Dayton on October 19, 2007. All faced various charges that included sponsoring and promoting animal fighting, illegal gambling, and conspiracy to sell and transport stolen vehicles, and/or weapons and drug crimes. Included in this group was Cornelius Burnett, who received a 36 month prison sentence on Tuesday for sponsoring and promoting animal fighting and weapons and drug charges. Another defendant, Jack D. Glisson, who pled guilty to conspiracy to sell and transport stolen vehicles in interstate commerce, was sentenced on December 4, 2007 to 21 months in prison. Other defendants in U.S. District Court have been sentenced to probation and some, including Pike, await sentencing.

The Hamilton County District Attorney’s Office prosecuted 18 individuals in “Operation Bite Back” on charges ranging from promoting dog fighting, training dogs, selling tickets to fights, attending dog fights, to various drug crimes. Douglas Blackwell, one of those prosecuted in Hamilton County, was sentenced to 42 months on electronic home confinement for his crimes. Blackwell also faced animal fighting and illegal gambling charges in federal court and was sentenced to three years’ probation and six months on electronic home monitoring for those crimes. Most of the other convictions in Hamilton County resulted in sentences of two years probation, plus community service and orders of restitution.

Thirty seven men and women have been prosecuted in Montgomery County as part of “Operation Bite Back” to date. Twenty seven have been convicted, including Matthew Simmons, who was found guilty on one count of promoting dog fighting and sentenced to six months in prison. The remaining sentences ranged from two to five years probation and most included mandatory animal awareness training and payment of restitution. Ten others are awaiting trial or sentencing in Montgomery County.

According to United States Attorney Gregory G. Lockhart, what has been revealed as a result of this investigation is the fact that dog fighting attracts other criminal activities, to include drug trafficking, gun running, illegal gambling, food stamp violations, and stolen vehicles and property offenses. “The animals suffer unspeakable cruelty in dog fights and communities experience great harm in connection with other illegal acts committed as part of these dog fighting operations,” Lockhart said.

Lockhart commended the law enforcement agencies involved in “Operation Bite Back” for their cooperative efforts in investigating these crimes. Those include the Human Society of the United States, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Ohio Attorney General’s Office, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigations, Ohio Department of Public Safety, Franklin County Sheriff’s Office, Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office, Tactical Crime Suppression Unit, Centerville Police Department, Dayton Police Department, Cincinnati Police Department, Miamisburg Police Department, Moraine Police Department, Kettering Police Department, German Township Police Department, Perry Township Police Department, Jackson Township Police Department, New Lebanon Police Department, and Trotwood Police Department, along with Hamilton and Montgomery County Prosecutors, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Dwight Keller, who is prosecuting the case in the United States District Court.

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